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REVIEWS AND NEW BOOKS

General Works, Theory and Its History

CL.-J. Herbert, Essai sur la Police Générale des Grains sur leurs Prix et sur les Effets de l'Agriculture (1755). Edited, with Introduction, by EDGARD DEPITRE. (Paris: Librairie Geuthner. 1910. Pp. xliii, vii, 166.)

A notable phase of recent economic study is the reprinting under competent editorship of important economic classics. Even before Adam Smith's time, Foulis in Edinburgh struck off attractive reprints of interesting texts—Law, Child, Gee, and Berkeley. Many years later came J. R. McCulloch's serviceable volumes of *Scarce and Valuable Tracts*, now become, as has very properly been observed, hardly less scarce and valuable than the original pamphlets. Thereafter the *Collection Guillaumin* in France and the *Scrittori Classici* in Italy were followed by single pieces of editorial work—Higg's Cantillon, Lamond's John Hales, Hull's Petty, Oncken's Quesnay. More recently, Brentano and Leser projected a *Sammlung* of German economic reprints, and Ashley began a similar series in England. Both undertakings languished after a period, and this lapse was responsible for the inception of 'the reprint of economic tracts', since carried on by the Johns Hopkins Press.

With that alert interest in doctrinal history which has always distinguished French economic study, the group of scholars associated in the newly established *Revue d'Histoire des Doctrines Économiques et Sociales* are now collaborating in the reissue of the writings of early French authors and translators of significance in the history of economic doctrines. The series will consist of some fifty volumes, of which five or six are to appear each year, under the general title *Collection des Économistes et des Réformateurs Sociaux de la France*, with the imprint of Librairie Paul Geuthner.

Four carefully edited volumes of the series have heretofore appeared—Dupont de Nemours (Dubois), Baudeau (Dubois), Le Mercier de la Rivière (Depitre), Morelly (Dolléans) and a fifth, Herbert's *Essai sur la police générale des grains*, edited by Professor Depitre, is before us. Graslin, Dupont de Nemours and Petit are in press, sixteen other works are already announced by

title to follow, and, most interesting of all, promise is made that the *Éphémérides du Citoyen* is to be issued as a supplement to the *Revue*.

Herbert's *Essai* while not an economic *introuvable* is yet like so many other pre-physiocratic writings not to be had for the asking. The book was a notable one and the extent of its circulation is suggested by the fact that the reviewer's own copy of the original edition has an ex-libris of one Alexander Hamilton. The present impression, to which Montaudouin de la Touche's *Supplément* has been added, has all the excellences of the series of which it forms part—an apparently trustworthy text, a facsimile title page, and a guide to original pagination. An index (*Table Analytique*) has been added, for which there does not seem to be the same occasion. Professor Depitre's editorial work is admirable. His introduction is distinguished by the ease and certainty of intimate scholarship, without being at any point ponderous.

It is not too much to say that this *Collection* makes possible for the first time adequate study by the ordinary student, of the development of French economic thought in the eighteenth century.

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The Common Sense of Political Economy. By PHILIP H. WICKSTEED. (New York: The Macmillan Company. 1910. Pp. xi, 702. \$4.25.)

Mr. Wicksteed's earlier books on economics were slender volumes, compact in style. The present work is not only large, but diffuse. Eschewing mathematics (except for a number of well-planned and well-executed diagrams), the author has sought to infuse life into his system of economic theory, by describing in its terms a host of common and simple economic relations. All this is done with remarkable literary skill. But despite the charms of Mr. Wicksteed's style, the book is one that few will care to read through. One feels, indeed, that facile phrase-making and well-contrived and ingenious exposition of details have been pushed so far that there is little to arrest and hold the reader's attention at the critical points of the discussion. There is also, it must be said, an undue amount of repetition, and especially of re-phrasing. But all in all the book deserves to be ranked among the most important productions of recent years.